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HISTORICAL FOOTPRINTS

IN

AMERICA.

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HISTORICAL FOOTPRINTS IN AMERICA.

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With the facilities of intercourse which steam navigation has created between Europe and America, and the habitual resort of the settlers on the Western Continent, to the marts and centres of gaiety of the Old World, it is becoming more and more difficult for us to realise all that is implied in the date A.D., 1492, as that in which American history begins. Few facts in the history of our globe are more singular, than that one hemisphere should have remained utterly unknown to the other till the close of the fifteenth century ; and the wondering admiration with which the discovery of the New World was then greeted by the Old, was not diminished by the disclosures that followed. New, indeed, the western hemisphere was, as is the planet Neptune, or the latest discovered asteroid ; or as the Flint-Folk of the drift are new to us. But with the discoveries of Cortes and Pizaro, the men of Europe became gradually familiarised with the conviction that it was no new world they had found ; but one with native relics of an ancient past : pyramids, temples, and hieroglyphics tempting to a comparison with those of Egypt ; and sculptures, rites, and institutions of various kinds, all pregnant with suggestive resemblances to those of the oldest Asiatic nations.

In that fifteenth century it had not occurred to the boldest scientific adventurer to conceive of the possibility of men who were not of the race of Adam. Speculative philosophy and science were, indeed, venturing boldly on many novel courses; yet St. Augustine's demonstration, which had satisfied the men of the fourth century of the impossibility of antipodes, was reproduced with undiminished force to those of the fifteenth century: since to assert the existence of inhabited lands on the opposite side of the earth, and beyond impassable oceans, would be to contradict the Bible, by maintaining that the world was occupied in part by nations not descended from Adam. From this it naturally resulted that when, in spite of such demonstration, antipodes were discovered; and an inhabited continent had been explored beyond the Atlantic, presenting to the gaze of the Old World social and political institutions, arts, and sciences, the growth of unknown centuries of progress: the only question discussed was, from what centre of the Eastern hemisphere were those derived? Egypt, Phœnicia, Carthage, India, China, Spain, Denmark, Ireland, and Wales, each found its advocates: The lost Atlantis of Plato and Seneca; the Ophir of Solomon; the nameless Atlantic islands of Hanno, Pharaoh-Necho, and other early explorers; the sanctuary of the lost Ten Tribes; the Vinland of Leif Ericson; the Huitramannaland of the Norse rovers from Iceland; and the western retreat of Madoc, son of Owen Gwyneth, King of North Wales: have all been sought in turn, and have stimulated the ingenious fancy of sanguine explorers among the traces of America's unwritten history.

That nations, possessed of language, arts, and government, were in occupation of America, was proof enough that the human race—the unity of which was then unquestioned,—had diffused itself into the western hemisphere; and this idea presented itself at first in a less startling form, from the belief, in which Columbus died, that only a new route had been opened up to eastern Asia. The conviction of ancient intercourse between the eastern and western hemispheres, fostered by such means, has accordingly furnished fruitful themes for speculation, almost from the first landing of Europeans on the American continent. Exaggerated resemblances have been traced out in the arts and architecture of Mexico and Peru to those of Egypt and India. Their hieroglyphics and picture writing have been hastily pronounced to be the undoubted offspring of those of the Nile. Philological resemblances, astronomical chronology, and religious rites, have all been

forced into the service of favourite theories ; and many ingenious and extravagant antiquarian romances, adapted to the popular taste by this means, have been welcomed as invaluable contributions to history : though in reality as insubstantial as the dreams of Merlin or the legends of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Nevertheless one class of monumental indices of intercourse between the eastern and western hemispheres, long prior to the fifteenth century, is of an indisputable kind. The Royal society of Northern Antiquaries of Copenhagen has placed the evidence of this before the world, in the most accessible form in the *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, and the *Antiquitates Americane, sive Scriptores Septentrionales rerum ante-Columbiarum in America*. The latter was issued from the Copenhagen press in 1837 ; and to this a supplement subsequently appeared, to the contents of which special reference will be made in discussing some of the supposed traces of the ante-Columbian colonisation of America. To those works, along with the correspondence and researches to which their preparation gave rise, is chiefly due the revived interest in the recovery of ancient traces of intercourse between the eastern and western hemisphere, which continued for some years to engross a large amount of interest among all classes in the United States.

From the literary memorials of the old Northmen thus restored to light, sufficient evidence has been disclosed to render highly credible, not only the discovery and colonisation of Greenland, by Eric the Red, a Norwegian colonist of Iceland,—apparently in the year 985,—but also the exploration of more southern lands, some of which must have formed part of the American continent. Of the authenticity of the manuscripts from whence those narratives are derived there is not the slightest room for question ; and the accounts which some of them furnish are so simple, natural and devoid of anything extravagant or improbable, that the internal evidence of genuineness is worthy of great consideration. The exuberant fancy which revels in the mythology and songs of the Northmen, would have constructed a very different tale had it been employed in the invention of a southern continent for the dreams of Icelandic and Greenland rovers. Some of the latter Sagas do, indeed, present so much resemblance in their tales of discovery, to those of older date, as to look like mere varied repetitions of the original narrative with a change of actors, such as might result from different versions of one account, transmitted for a time by oral tradition before being committed to writing. But, notwithstanding

all reasonable doubts as to the accuracy of details, there is strong probability in favour of the authenticity of the American Vinland of the Northmen.

The Colonisation of Greenland, however, rests on no probabilities of oral or written tradition, but is an indisputable historical fact. In A.D., 999, Leif Ericson, the son of its discoverer, made a voyage to Norway, at the time when Olaf Trygvesson, the Saint Olave of Norse hagiology, was introducing Christianity into Scandinavia. Under the influence of the royal missionary, Leif Ericson abandoned paganism; and carrying back with him to Greenland teachers of the new faith, it found a ready acceptance among the Arctic Colonists. Greenland remained in connection with the mother country till the middle of the twelfth century, when it attempted to throw off its allegiance to Magnus, King of Norway, but was reduced to submission by an expedition despatched for that purpose by Eric, King of Denmark, whose niece was wedded to the Norwegian King.

There were two Norse colonies, those of east and west Greenland. The colonists of the western coast appear to have been exterminated by the Esquimaux; but the fate of those of the eastern settlement was long a mystery on which the modern Dane and Norwegian speculated as one of the obscure marvels of their race's history. It is obvious from the early details of the colony that the shores of Greenland must have been accessible in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to an extent wholly unknown in the experience of modern Arctic voyagers. In all probability the decay of the colonies is due to a considerable extent to climatic changes which had already, in the fourteenth century, begun to hem in the Greenland coasts with the icy barriers which for four centuries precluded all access to their inhospitable shores. But a great mortality among the voyagers trading between Norway and Greenland was occasioned in A.D., 1348, by a frightful plague known by the name of the *Black Death*; and it was long maintained that the whole Greenland colony had been exterminated by the same deadly scourge. Later accounts, however, still refer to the colonists; and the records of the reign of Queen Margaret—under whom the crowns of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were united in 1397,—include references to the efforts then made to keep up the communication with Greenland. But political troubles at home speedily rendered the Queen indifferent to such remote dependencies. To all appearance, also, the Greenland coasts were being gradually hemmed in by

impassable barriers of ice, which cut off all intercourse with them subsequent to the close of the fourteenth century, and the very existence of the long lost region became a matter of doubt.

From time to time, however the subject was revived. Many a Norse legend and poem celebrated the charms of the Hesperian region which was fabled to lie embattled within the impassable Arctic barriers, clothed in the luxuriant verdure of a perpetual spring. In Iceland, where the old Norse colonists had maintained their ground, the faith in the ancient Greenland colonies remained unshaken; and received confirmation from various indications of the lost settlement, as well as from the definite traditions current among the Islanders, and narrated in their Sagas.

Among older memorials and the mythic Vinland, it is recorded that towards the seventeenth century, an oar was drifted on the coast bearing this inscription in runic characters: *OFT VAR EK REK DRO THICK. Oft was I weary when I drew thee.* To this poet, James Montgomery, refers in the fourth canto of his *Greenland*, when following the later route of the Moravian Brethren in their generous exile:—

"Here, while in peace the weary pilgrims rest,
Turn we our voyage from the new-found west,
Sail up the current of departed time,
And seek along its banks that vanished clime,
By ancient Scalds in Runic verse renowned,
Now like old Babylon no longer found.
"Oft was I weary when I toiled at thee;"
This on an oar abandoned to the sea
Some hand had graven. From what foundered boat
It fell; how long on ocean's waves afloat;
Who marked it with that melancholy line:
No record tells. Greenland, such fate was thine:
Where'er thou wast, of thee remains no more
Than a brief legend on a foundling oar;
And he whose song would now revive thy fame,
Grasps but the shadow of a mighty name."

Repeated unsuccessful attempts had been made by Norwegian, Danish, and English voyagers, at the time this poem was published, to effect a passage through the icy barriers around the east coast of Greenland; and it was not till 1822 that the enterprise of the distinguished Arctic voyager, Captain Scoresby, was rewarded with success.]

Later explorations, however, shew that the sites of early colonisation had been more to the west, within Davis Strait; and there at length, in 1824, and subsequent years, well defined runic inscriptions and sepulchral records in the old Norse, or Icelandic language, have been brought to light; and are now for the most part deposited in the Christiansborg Palace at Copenhagen.

The result of such discoveries not unnaturally led to an eager desire to recover, if possible, similar traces of the early Norse Voyagers' visits to Vinland and other real or imaginary sites on the mainland of the American continent. In this there was nothing improbable; and should a runic inscription, analogous to those already brought to light at Kingiktorsoak, Igalikko, and other Greenland sites, reward the zealous researches of New England antiquaries, it would only confirm allusions to ante-Columbian voyages to the continent, already generally accepted as resting on good historical evidence. The search, however, has hitherto been attended with very ambiguous success, as shown in the well-known history of the Assonet or Dighton Rock inscription. Assuming that the voyages of Leif Ericson, Thorfinn Karlsefne, and other old Norse explorers, are authentic and indisputable, their visits to the American mainland were of no permanent character; and it may serve to illustrate the probabilities in favour of the recovery of any memorials of ante-Columbian voyagers, if we review such traces as are still discoverable, apart from direct written and historical evidence, of the actual presence of European settlers on the Continent of America, in the sixteenth, and even in the seventeenth century.

Among the remains of the ancient Norse colonists of Greenland, architectural memorials of a substantial character attest their perpetuation of European arts in their arctic settlements. The ruins of more than one ancient Christian edifice still mark the sites consecrated to religious services by the Norsemen who, while still pagans, sought a home in that strange region of the icy north. One of these primitive ecclesiastical ruins is a plain but tastefully constructed church of squared hewn stone, at Kakortok, in the district of Brattahlid. Though unroofed, the walls are nearly entire; and numerous objects of early European art, including fragments of church bells found in the same vicinity, confirm the evidence of the civilisation established and cultivated there by early colonists. Only a few miles distant from this ruined church the Igalikko runic inscription wa

found with its simple memorial of parental affection: VIGDIS
M[AGNVS] D[OTTIR] HVILIR HER GLEDE GVTH SAL
HENAR, i.e., *Vigdis, Magnus' daughter, rests here; may God glad-*
den her soul.

With such literate and architectural remains of the Greenland colonists of the tenth century still extant, it was not unnatural for New England antiquaries to turn with renewed vigour to the search for corresponding remains in the supposed Vinland of the same early voyagers, when the ancient manuscripts edited for the *Antiquitates Americane* had established the discovery of the continent of America by Norsemen of the tenth century. Among those, the members of the Rhode Island Society took a foremost part. They had already furnished materials for illustrating the venerable manuscripts edited in that imposing quarto, which seemed to its sanguine editors to place their dreams of a Norse Columbus of the Tenth Century beyond all dispute. The Assonet, or Dighton Rock, on the east bank of the Taunton river, which yielded to its antiquarian transcribers the long desiderated traces of runic epigraphy, has attracted the attention of New England scholars for nearly two centuries. Its history is alike curious and amusing, but need not be detailed here.* It is a detached rock, partly covered at high water, the exposed surface of which is covered with Indian devices rudely graven, and greatly defaced by time. So early as 1680 Dr. Danforth executed a careful copy of it; and since then it has been again and again retraced, engraved, and made the theme of learned commentaries by New England, British, French, and Danish scholars; each striving in turn to enlist it in proof of the favoured theory of the hour; and to make out from its rude scratchings: Phœnician, Punic, Siberian, or Old Norse characters, graven by ante-Columbian voyagers in the infancy of the world. The triumphs of the antiquarian seers culminated in the year 1837, when the *Antiquitates Americane* issued from the Danish press, with elaborate engravings of this Dighton rock, from one of which—contributed by a Commission appointed by the Rhode Island Historical Society—its ingenious editor was able to furnish the interpretation of a “runic inscription” suddenly brought to light among the rude devices of the Wabenakies’ picture-writing. The inscription was only too apt a re-echo of the Saga manuscripts; and indeed is now affirmed to have been the deliberate imposition of a foreigner resident at the time in New-

* Vide *Prehistoric Man*, Vol. II. p. 172.

port.* However it originated, certain it is that the so-called runic characters on the Dighton rock have vanished as completely as the faith in their marvellous historical revelations.

The literate evidence which the *Antiquitates Americanae* furnishes in proof of the discovery of America by Northmen of the Tenth Century, rests on authority wholly independent of any real or fancied confirmation, derived from Greenland or New England inscriptions. The stimulus thereby furnished to antiquarian research was therefore no less strong than thoroughly legitimate. The members of the Rhode Island Historical Society accordingly renewed their search for traces of ante-Columbian art; and their attention was at once directed to a substantial piece of masonry which had occupied a prominent site at Newport, Rhode Island, beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant. As a genuine American ruin of former generations the old Round Tower on Newport common forms an exceedingly striking feature; and the historical and literary associations ascribed to it, as well as the critical warfare which has raged around its site, and ransacked the mysteries of its very foundations, have added not a little to its genuine interest. When the antiquaries of Copenhagen were in search of relics of the long-lost Vinland, careful drawings of the old Tower were despatched to them, and welcomed as supplying all that they desired. Engravings reproduced from them illustrate the Supplement to the *Antiquitates Americanae*, and the authentication of the old ruin as an architectural monument of the arts of Vinland and its Norse colonists of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is thus unhesitatingly set forth by Professor Rafn and his brother antiquaries of Copenhagen:—"There is no mistaking in this

* *The Controversy touching the Old Stone Mill in the Town of Newport, Rhode Island.* Newport. Charles E. Hammet, jr. 1851. p. 52. "The version of the inscription published in that work [the *Antiquitates Americanae*], and distributed throughout Europe and America, was altered so as to make it appear to have been the work of the Scandinavians, by altering the characters, and adding in the body of the inscription, the characters ORINX which is said to be the name of one of their early navigators."

The tracings on the rock read as OR, appear in an engraving so early as 1790; the remainder, which serve to complete the name—not of *Orinx* as stated above, but of *Thorfin*, with a concise record of his fifty-one followers,—appear for the first time in the copy made, and sent to Copenhagen in 1830. No one will believe, for a moment, that the members of the R. I. Historical Society had any hand in a fraudulent transcript, beyond their transmission of the drawing, executed either by some very credulous or designing copyist, of the rude and ill-defined Indian devices.

instance, the style in which the more ancient stone edifices of the North were constructed, the style which belongs to the Roman or ante-gothic architecture, and which, especially after the time of Charlemagne, diffused itself from Italy over the whole of the west and north of Europe, where it continued to predominate, until the close of the twelfth century. . . . From such characteristics as remain we can scarcely form any other inference than one, in which I am persuaded that all who are familiar with old Northern architecture will concur: that this building was erected at a period decidedly not later than the twelfth century.* Having thus settled the age of the venerable structure, and scornfully dismissed the idea of its erection for a windmill, as one the futility of which any architect could discern; that of its supposed primary destination as a watch tower is also rejected: and the final conclusion indicated is that it is an ecclesiastical structure which originally "belonged to some monastery or Christian place of worship in one of the chief parishes in Vinland. In Greenland there are still to be found ruins of several round buildings in the vicinity of the churches. These round buildings have been most likely Baptisteries;" and in proof of this, reference is made to an octagonal building forming part of the ruins of Mellifont Abbey, in the County of Louth, in Ireland.

To venture on questioning the genuineness of this Norse relic after these attestations of its credentials to such venerable antiquity, involved some degree of boldness. Its associations moreover, connect it unmistakably with the olden time. It forms a central point in some of the romantic scenes of Cooper's "Red Rover;" and Longfellow, assuming its antiquity as amply attested for all a poet's purposes, has associated it with another discovery of so-called Norse relics, which was welcomed at the time as fresh confirmation of the Scandinavian colonisation of the ancient Vinland. An Indian skeleton was dug up at Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1831, buried in a sitting posture, wrapped in cedar bark, with some tubes, two arrow-heads, and other fragments of brass lying beside it. At any other time, the native origin of the whole would have been acknowledged beyond all dispute. But the discovery coincided with the researches of Professor Rafn and his colleagues at Copenhagen.† Thither accordingly specimens of the relics were sent. A portion of what was somewhat

**Antiquitates Americanae*, Supp. p. 18.

† *Memoire sur la decouverte de l'Amerique au dixieme siecle*. Copenhagen. 1848.

grandly designated the "pectoral," or "breastplate," on being submitted to the chemist, Berzelius, was found to bear a marvellous resemblance to modern brass; and an elaborate account of the "Discovery of Antiquities made at Fall River, Massachusetts," with the subsequent investigations, was published in the *Mémoires de la société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord*, along with a letter from a learned Boston Antiquary on "the famous Dighton Rock, the marvel of this region," with its ancient characters, affording indubitable proof "that the Northmen have been on that spot."*

Here, at any rate, were ample materials for the poet. No better credentials could be desired for the hero of a genuine Norse Ballad, whatever the severer incredulity of the historical student might demand; and the Norse Viking, resuscitated from the skeleton in armour, speaks accordingly, narrating in his epical lyric, the ballad-legend of the Newport Round Tower. In response to the invocation of the modern Skald, the Viking recounts his passion, when,—like Othello, telling his adventurous tales,—the tender eyes of King Hildebrand's daughter kindled his heart with their soft splendour. But though they shone responsive, the royal father laughed his suit to scorn.

"Why did they leave, that night,
Her nest unguarded?"

Bearing from the Norwegian shore in flight with the blue-eyed maiden, the fierce Viking tells how he dashed mid-ships on his pursuers; and leaving Hildebrand and his crew to perish in the "black-water," he sweeps fearless before the gale into the unknown West:—

As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden:
So towards the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore,
Stretching to leeward;

* *Mem. de la Soc. Royale des Antiquaires du Nord*. 1840-44. P. 117.

There for my lady's bower,
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

But the modern Skald who rehearses the old Viking's tale, claims at the same time a poet's license. "That this building could not have been erected for a windmill," says Professor Rafn, "is what an architect can easily discern." "I will not enter into a discussion of the point," responds the poet. "It is sufficiently well established for the purpose of a ballad; though doubtless many an honest citizen of Newport, who has passed his days within sight of the Round Tower, will be ready to exclaim with Sancho, 'God bless me! did I not warn you to have a care of what you were doing, for that is nothing but a windmill; and nobody could mistake it but one who had the like in his head.'"

The controversy was still maintained among the New England Oldbucks and Wardours, when in 1847, a learned mediator dating from "Brown University, Providence," proceeded to publish, under the *nom de plume* of "Antiquarian," a series of abstracts from a joint Report of Professor Rafn of Copenhagen, and "Graetz of Gottenburg," and from an elaborate narrative prepared by "Professor Scrobein," a distinguished geologist, despatched to Rhode Island by the unanimous vote of the Royal College at Copenhagen. From the researches of this well accredited commissioner, the ruined tower is ascertained to have been "an appendage to a temple, and used for religious offices, as a baptistery or baptismal font. It appears to have been erected by the Northmen, in the eleventh century, during a sojourn of Bishop Eric in Vinland, as the island was called, from the excellency of its wine and abundance of its grapes." Excavations within the ruin brought to light "the foundations of the *receptimur*, or place where the candidates stood while receiving the baptismal shower . . . In close proximity to this was a second foundation, that of the *palestrum*;" and the discovery was completed, and placed beyond all dispute by the finding of various ancient coins, including "some of Henry II. 1160, which would lead us to believe that some kind of commercial intercourse existed in those days."

To the manifest delight of the rogue—an undergraduate we may surmise,—who palmed off this grave hoax on the Rhode Islanders, it was taken up seriously. "Graetz of Gottenburg" passed muster under

the wing of the veritable Raft of Copenhagen. "Bishop Oelricher" who bequeathed the 1400 reichsthalers needed for prosecuting the interesting inquiry escaped challenge. But an elderly disputant, "one of the oldest inhabitants," indignantly affirmed the falsity of Professor Scrobein's report; that he had been grossly deceived; that he had no hand in the report attributed to him; and only neglected to inquire if anybody at Copenhagen or elsewhere had ever before heard of this mythic Professor, whose report, as the venerable controversialist maintains, "was a gross and palpable imposition on the [Copenhagen] committee, the Royal Society and the world." The "Antiquarian" of Brown University gravely responded with still more startling extracts from the Professor's report; which document, says he, "I would willingly submit, but its extreme length forbids!"* And so the old mill grew ever more famous. More than one poet added his contribution to its renown; and in the "Poem of Aquidneck," the muse thus questions and solves its controverted points of history:—

How long hath Time held on his mighty march
 Since first arose thy time-defying arch?
 Did thus th' astonished Indian gaze on thee,
 A mystery staring at a mystery?
 A son of Canaan shall we rather say,
 Viewing the work of brethren pass'd away?
 Was it Phœnician, Norman, Saxon toil
 That sunk thy rock-based pillars in the soil?
 How looked the bay, the forest, and the hill,
 When first the sun beheld thy walls, old mill?
 Alas! the Antiquarian's dream is o'er,
 Thou art an old stone windmill,—nothing more!

The Norse builders and ante-Columbian date of the Newport Tower, which found in earlier days as zealous champions as the Phœnician origin long ascribed to the Round Towers of Ireland,—after being thus subjected to the sly assaults of the satirist, as well as the severe questioning of grave critical censors,—have been so universally abandoned, that some may perhaps deem it scant courtesy to recall the forsworn creed. In reality, however, this chapter in the history of American archæological research is replete with interest and value. But for the investigations into the significance of the

* *Controversy touching the Old Stone Mill in the Town of Newport, Rhode Island. Newport, 1891, p. 16.*

Dighton Rock inscription, extending over nearly two centuries; and the more recent researches into the origin and history of the Newport Tower: we might have good reason to assume that all inquiry after historic footprints had been delayed until their last traces had been obliterated by successive generations of colonists in the long-settled New England States. Happily, the history of the Dighton Rock refutes this assumption, and furnishes good reason for believing that no important ante-Columbian monument has disappeared within the period of Anglo-American occupation. The long unheeded Round Tower adds its confirmation to the same belief. Probably no member of the Rhode Island Historical Society now doubts that in the picturesque ruin which has acquired an additional interest by the learned strife to which it has given rise, we have the identical structure referred to in the will of Benedict Arnold, first governor under the Charter granted by Charles II. to the Colony of Rhode Island, and Providence plantations, in 1663. He had removed from Providence to Newport ten years previously; and in his will, dated there, the 20th of December, 1677, he thus directs: "My body I desire and appoint to be buried at ye North East corner of a parcel of ground containing three rod square being of and lying in my land in or near ye line or path from my dwelling-house leading to my stone built wind-mill in ye town of Newport." In another clause he bequeathes the same "stone built wind mill" to his wife Damaris Arnold, and after her decease to his youngest daughter, Freelove Arnold, having provided for his elder daughter, Godsgift, in other clauses. The names are characteristic of the old Puritan, whose father was one of those who came from Salem to Providence, and shared the latter with Roger Williams in 1636. An entry in the Journal of Peter Easton, one of the first settlers, records, under the date of Aug. 28th, 1675, a great storm, which "blew down our wind mill and did much harm."* The brief interval between this date and that of Governor Arnold's will, leaves little room for doubt as to that of the stone-built one which he there devises to his heirs. The date and its associations, though unacceptable to those who would fain decypher runic inscriptions of the tenth or eleventh century on the Dighton Rock, identify the first Norse discoverers, and trace out their settlements in the Vinland of the Sagas: is nevertheless one sufficiently near that initial date of A.D.

* The controversy touching the Old Stone Mill in the Town of Newport, Rhode Island. Newport, 1851, p. 64.

1620, when the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, to give the old ruin on Newport common as great a value in the eye of every true hearted American, as the CATT STANE can claim from the British antiquary who believes that its rude letters record the burial-place of Vetta son of Victus, son of Woden, the lineal ancestor of Hengist, the Teutonic colonist of England.

A picturesque old relic, known *par excellence* as The Old House of Boston, stood till 1860 at the corner of North and Market Streets of the New England Capital, with its quaint gables, and overhanging oaken-timbered walls, such as abound in the old capitals of Europe, and look as if they had been built before the laws of gravitation had a being. The date latterly assigned to it was 1680; but the march of improvement knows no antiquarian sympathies; and a range of modern warehouses has usurped the site of the venerable civic relic. Here and there among the burial grounds of New England and other older States, weathered and half-defaced stones commemorate the worth of early colonists; and doubtless some lie buried, where they may be found in other ages, when the Roman characters and English language of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will seem as strange to the eyes of a new generation as the runes of the Greenland Norsemen do to our own. But a recent discovery towards the northern limits of the New England States suffices to encourage the hope that still earlier traces of the first European colonists may yet gratify intelligent curiosity with glimpses of the beginnings of America's history. This new found historical footprint of the seventeenth century, only brought to light in the autumn of 1863, is a plate of copper measuring ten inches by eight, found at Castine, in the State of Maine,—the old Indian Pentagoet,—near the mouth of the Penobscot river, famous with the Kennebunk, or Kennebec, as it is now called, as marches of the French and English debateable land, subsequent to the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was discovered in the course of excavations made in constructing a battery at the mouth of Castine harbour.* The corroded sheet of copper attracted no attention when first restored to light; nor was it till its discoverer had cut a piece off it to repair a boat, that his attention was drawn to the characters engraved on its surface. Fortunately the detached piece was easily recovered; and on being restored to its place, the inscription was decyphered as follows:

* *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, April, 1864. p. 60.

1648 . 8 . IVN . F.
 LEO PARIS . IN .
 CAPVC . MISS.
 POSVI HOC FV-
 NDTM IN HNR-
 EM NRÆ DMÆ
 SANCTÆ SPEI

The inscription, it will be seen, commemorates the erection in what was then a part of *La Nouvelle France*, of, as may be presumed, a Mission Chapel of the Capuchins, dedicated to our Lady of Holy Hope. Charlevoix, in his *Histoire Général de la Nouvelle France*, refers to a visit of the Jesuit Father, Dreuilletes, to a Hospice of the Capuchin Fathers on the Kennebec river, in 1646; and states that at that date,—only two years before the event commemorated in the inscription,—they had another mission house at Pentagoet. The Capuchin Fathers were a fraternity belonging to the Franciscan Order of Mendicant Friars, whose mission here, and in the Kennebec region, appears to have been, not to the Indians, but to the French colonists of Acadia and the neighbouring mainland. The inscribed plate records the laying of the foundation stone in which it was deposited, by brother Leo of Paris, at the date named; and may be read in extenso thus:—1648, 8 junii, frater Leo Parisiensis, in Capucinorum missione posui hoc fundamentum in honorem Nostræ Dominae Sanctæ Spei.

The date, though so modern, according to the estimate of European antiquaries, carries the mind back to a very primitive period in the history of Maine; and the interest of the inscription is enhanced by the associations connected with the site of the building it commemorates. "Few spots on the coast of New England can boast so much natural beauty, and none has had the vicissitudes of its history so interwoven with the history of different nations, as the peninsula of Pentagoet, Penobscot, Castine." The date also has its own peculiar significance in the past history of the New England States. This might be illustrated by various contemporary events. Perhaps the most memorable, as it is the most characteristic, is that in that very year—when Europe was arranging the peace of Westphalia,—witchcraft came to a head in the New World, and the first of the New England witches was hanged in Massachusetts Bay.

Corresponding memorials of an earlier date doubtless lie undisturbed beneath the older foundations of churches and hospices of Lower Canada. The little church of Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay, still occupies the site consecrated to the service of God, on what was one of the earliest settlements in the New World. A trading post was established there by French fur-traders, under the special favor of Henry IV.; and contracts were entered into by two merchant traders of Rouen and St. Malo for its colonisation as early as 1599. Within very recent years the remains were still visible of a stone mansion built by Captain Chauvin who died there in 1603, after having made two voyages with settlers to Tadoussac. A slighter, yet more enduring memorial of the old colonists attracted my attention when visiting the spot, in the scattered tufts of Sweet William, Mignonette, and other garden flowers, repeating the tale of Goldsmith's Deserted Village:

"Where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild."

Jamestown, Virginia, which claims to be the earliest settlement on the American continent, was founded by the English Captain, Newport, in 1607, and on the 3rd of July, in the following year, Champlain laid the foundation of Quebec. The site of the first fort is now occupied by the venerable church of *Nôtre Dame des Victoires*, one of the oldest edifices in the City of Quebec, which received its present name on the defeat of the English forces under Sir William Phipps, in 1690. But the most curious inscription now visible on the old-fashioned buildings of the picturesque capital of Lower Canada, is one accompanying a quaint piece of sculpture known as the *Chien d'Or*, a work of the following century. But modern though it is, tradition has already confused its associations and forgotten its significance. Over one of the windows of an old house near the Prescott Gate, now used as the Post Office, is an ornamental pediment, the centre of which is occupied by a slab of dark limestone, on which a dog is sculptured in high relief and gilded, represented gnawing at a bone; and beneath it this inscription:—

"Je suis un Chien qui ronge mon os,
En le rongeant, je prends mon repos,
Un jour viendra qui n'est pas venu,
Ou je mordrai, qui m'avra mordu."

The house is said to have been the mansion of a wealthy Bordeaux

merchant, who put up this piece of sculpture, with the accompanying quatrain, as a lampoon on M. Bigot, French Intendant and President of the Council; and paid for his caustic wit with his life. But the date of the assassination of M. Philibert, the supposed lampoonist, is proved to have been long subsequent to that of 1732, inscribed on the stone; and the origin and special significance of the inscription remain an enigma.

In the able and well digested resumé of American Archæology prepared by the learned librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, he remarks: "We should be glad to see gathered into one chapter, under an appropriate head, all the evidences of Art beyond the ability of the natives, that must be assigned to an ante-Columbian period, and all other indications of a foreign people, before that era, in the United States. They cannot be numerous; and the point is of sufficient importance to be distinctly presented with all the force it possesses. They have hitherto proved unsubstantial whenever we have attempted to grasp them."• The Dighton Rock, the inscribed rock on Cunningham's Island, Lake Erie; the much controverted "Grave Creek Stone;" and a contemptibly gross forgery with the date 1587, "discovered, according to most respectable authority, on a plate of mica upon the breast of a skeleton, buried after the ancient manner, in a mound near that at Grave Creek, from whence the more celebrated inscribed stone was derived:" are all noticed, and some of them dismissed too gently by their courteous reviewer.

The invention of spurious inscriptions: from the notorious gold plates of the Mormon Gospel, to the "Ohio Holy Stone," and the new version of the Ten Commandments, partly in Hebrew and partly in unknown characters, engraved on a stone tablet, discovered under an ancient mound at Newark, Ohio, in 1860; have for the most part been the work of such illiterate and shallow knaves, that they scarcely merit serious notice, were it not for the amount of discussion they excited, before the all engrossing civil war preoccupied the public mind with its stern realities. The former relic, clumsily made out of common hone-stone, has been repeatedly engraved. A State Geologist of high repute pronounced its material to be "*novaculite*, a stone entirely unknown among the rocks or minerals of the Ohio region;" and a distinguished free-mason, "well informed upon the history of his order, and upon antiquities in general," certified that "the stone was one

• *Archæology of the United States*: by W. F. Haven. p. 134.

used by masons of a certain grade in the East, soon after the building of the first temple by Solomon, and before the erection of the second,"—with much else equally wonderful; so that the **HOLY KEY-STONE**, as it was now designated, became an object of immense interest to American free-masons. The discussions on the authenticity and significance of the mound version of the Decalogue fell with equal propriety into the hands of divines, though not without other learned aid. The Rev. J. W. McCarty, Rector of Trinity Church, Newark, was the first to interpret the mysterious characters. The Rev. Theodore Dwight confirmed his interpretation, and proved the antiquity of the inscription by references to Gesenius, comparisons with rare coins of the Maccabees, and remarkable coincidences with the Samaritan version. J. J. Benjamin, "perhaps the best Hebrew scholar now in this country, whose home is in the Turkish Province of Moldavia, and who is now in this country for the purpose of prosecuting researches among the Indians for evidences of the Lost Tribes," with the aid of an interpreter, gave new readings; until not a few rejoiced in the belief that the veritable sepulchre of Moses had at length been discovered,—not in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth Peor; but in the Newark valley, in the State of Ohio.*

The favourite idea of finding the Lost Ten Tribes among the Red Indians of the New World, which pervades Lord Kingsborough's elaborate work, and played a prominent part in the speculations of the earlier American ethnologists and antiquaries, lies at the root of this class of marvels. It retained its hold on the popular mind as long as such subjects possessed any attractions; and notices of the discovery of shekels and other Hebrew relics could be easily multiplied by a little research in the files of Western American newspapers. The Rev. George Duffield, of Detroit, furnishes one account of a Hebrew Shekel, found in Indiana among the bones supposed to have been thrown out of an ancient mound; and conjectured to be of the time of the Maccabees.† The discovery of a large hoard at Jerusalem, in recent years, has rendered the silver shekel a commodity by no means rare; though its appearance might well excite wonder, among the genuine contents

* *Cincinnati Commercial*, July 12th, 1860; Nov 5th, 7th &c. *Newark North American*, July 5th. 1860, &c. *Harper's Weekly Journal*, Sept. 5th 1860. *New York Independent*, March 14th, 1861. *A representation of the two stones, with the characters inscribed on them, that were found by D. Wyrick, during the summer of 1860. near Newark, Ohio; &c., &c.*

† Schoolcraft's *History of the Indians*. Vol. iv. p. 149.

of a Western Indian mound. "We have at hand," says Mr. Haven, "Jewish phylacteries that were taken from beneath the soil, in a country village, where it was declared Jews were never known to have been; but a follower of Moses was ultimately traced to the very spot where these were found."* The *Eagle* newspaper of Jackson, Missouri, describes "a veritable Egyptian coin," found there in December, 1858, about thirty feet below the surface, in digging a well; and comments on the evidence thus furnished from time to time, "that the country was known centuries before the time of Columbus, not only to the Northmen and other Europeans, but to the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, and even to the Chinese." Similar notices of the recovery of ancient coins have been repeatedly published; and, considering the zeal devoted to numismatic collections in America, it is far from improbable that an occasional stray waif from these cabinets may have furnished genuine materials for such a discovery. But it is to be feared that the majority of them are no better authenticated than the reputed find of the apochryphal Professor Scrobein, among the foundations of the Newport Round Tower.

Of another class of Antiquities is "the Alabama Stone," an innocent piece of blundering, not without its significance. It was discovered near the Black Warrior River, about forty years ago, when no rumours of the old Northmen's visits to Vinland stimulated the dishonest zeal of relic hunters, or tempted the credulity of over-zealous antiquaries; and so its mysterious Roman capitals and remote ante-Columbian date were only wondered at as an inexplicable riddle. As originally transcribed this record of the thirteenth century ran thus:

HISRNEHNDREV.

1232

Had this Alabama stone turned up opportunely in 1830, when the Antiquaries of New England were in possession of a roving commission on behalf of Finn Magnussen and other Danish heirs and assignees of old Ari Marson, who knows what might have been made of so tempting a morceau? From the *Annales Flateyenses*, we learn of "Eric Grœnlandinga biskup" who, in A.D., 1121, went to seek out Vinland; and in the following century the *Annales Holenses*, recovered by Torfœus from the episcopal seat of Holum in Iceland, supply this tempting glimpse: "*faunst nyja land*," i.e., new land is found. With

* *Archæology of the United States*, p. 135.

such a hint what might not learned ingenuity have done to unriddle the mysteries of the New World in the year of grace, 1232? Unhappily its fate has been to fall into the hands of Mr. Samuel F. Haven for literary editing, which he does in this unromantic fashion :

"We have before us the 'Alabama Stone' found, some thirty years ago, near the Black Warrior river. To our eyes it reads HISPAN. ET IND. REX. as plainly as the same inscription on a Spanish quarter of a dollar somewhat worn. The figures may be as above represented, but of course they cannot be intended for a date," unless indeed it be 1632. The "Rutland stone," duly honoured in the *Antiquitates Americanae*, next comes under review, with its supposed characters graven and then filled in with a black composition. But this is a counterpart to the famous "Runamo Inscription" cut on the surface of a flat rock at Hoby, between Carlshamn and Runamo in Bleking, a Province of Sweden. Saxo Grammaticus tells us in the preface to his *Historia Danica* that King Waldemar the Great, in the twelfth century, sent emissaries skilled in Runic lore to read and copy the inscription. Olaus Wormius tried it again nearly five hundred years after. But what both had failed to decypher, Professor Magnusen of Copenhagen mastered in 1834, and made it out to be an inscription in old-northern runes, and regular alliterative verse, referring to the heroes in the battle of Braavalle, fought, A.D., 680. To no fitter seer could the "Rutland Stone," with its regular series of literal characters, be despatched. But, alas for the credit of the Antiquarian craft, the Runamo inscription had by this time been discerned to be nothing more than the natural markings on a block of graphic granite: and to the same class of relics the Rutland Stone must be referred. Old enough it is for the most ambitious stickler for the antiquity of the New World; ancient indeed as the oldest of those records interpreted by the author of "the Testimony of the Rocks;" and inscribed by the same hand that formed its rocky matrix.

But from such learned and unlearned blunderings,—not without their value from the curious illustrations they afford of the change from the exclusive pedantry and dilettantism of the eighteenth century of Europe, to the widely diffused, but superficial knowledge of the American nineteenth century;—it is pleasant to turn to an inscription of early date which invites consideration as a genuine, though rudely executed record of the sixteenth century. The "Manlius Stone," now referred to, was discovered about the year 1820, in the

Township of Manlius, Onondaga County, New York, by a farmer, when gathering the stones out of a field brought for the first time into cultivation. It is an irregular spherical boulder, about fourteen inches in diameter, now deposited in the Museum of the Albany Institute. On one side, which is smooth and nearly flat, the following inscription is rudely, but regularly cut, with the device, at the dividing line, of a serpent twining round a tree :

Leo. De		L : : 11
VI, 1520		x

The letters on the right side are somewhat defaced; but the stone looks like a rude memorial hastily executed by some explorer, on the most convenient tablet at hand, either as a memento and evidence of his having reached the spot,—in itself a fact of no slight interest, when the date and locality are considered;—or as the record made by some friendly hand to mark the last resting place of a companion who had persevered thus far among the first explorers of the New World's mysteries. But like most American inscriptions, that of the Manlius Stone has been tortured into meanings not very easily discernible by any ordinary process of interpreting such simple records. "By the figure of a serpent climbing a tree," says one ingenious decypherer* "a well-known passage in the Pentateuch is clearly referred to. By the date the sixth year of the reign of the Pontiff, Leo X. has been thought to be denoted. This appears to be probable, less clearly from the inscriptive phrase: *Leo de Lon VI.* than from the plain date, 1520, being six years after the Pontiff took the chair:" which, however, it is not, as Giovanni de Medici succeeded Julius II. in March, 1513. Mr. Buckingham Smith recently submitted to the American Antiquarian Society a paper devoted to the elucidation of inscribed stones found on ancient Indian sites,† among which he includes both the Grave Creek Stone and the Dighton Rock. Applying the same rule to those as to the Manlius Stone, he discovers in their characters, initials or ciphers used in the Catholic church, and renders them as abridged invocations to Christ and the Virgin Mary. Of the Manlius Stone he says, with more hesitation, "as, in the year of Christ, 1520, Giovanni de Medici (Leo X.) sat upon the Papal throne, the words might possibly have been LEO DECImus PONTifex MAXImus." Again the same inscription is assumed by another interpreter to be

* Schoolcraft's *Notes on the Iroquois*, p. 326.

† *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, April, 1863, p. 83.

a memorial of Juan Ponce de Leon, the discoverer of Florida, and to "tally exactly with the sixth year after his landing;" which, however, it does not, as that took place on *Pasqua Florid*, or Palm Sunday, A.D., 1512. The attempt, indeed, to identify the name thus rudely graven on a stray boulder, either with that of the sovereign pontiff, Leo X. or with Don Juan Ponce de Leon, is only less extravagant than the persistent decyphering of that of the Icelandic Thorfinn on the Dighton rock.

Apart, however, from any such special identification of the object of the memorial on the Manlius Stone, it is a relic of considerable interest. No reasonable grounds exist for questioning its genuineness; and we are thus supplied with an inscription of a date within eighteen years of the first landing of Columbus on the mainland; and only six years subsequent to Sir Walter Raleigh's first expedition to the country which, on the return of his exploring party, received the name of Virginia. A discovery of this nature, associated with the earliest known period of European exploration of the American continent, in a locality so far to the northward, and so remote from the sea coast, when taken into consideration along with the authentic traces of older Scandinavian settlement still discoverable in Greenland, is calculated to confirm the doubts of any Scandinavian colonisation of Vinland in ante-Columbian centuries. That the old Northmen visited some portions of the American coasts appears to be confirmed by credible testimony; but that their presence was transient, and that they left no enduring evidence of their visits, seem no less certain. To the Spanish pioneers of American discovery and civilisation in the centuries subsequent to the era of Columbus, we must therefore look for the earliest memorials of European adventure in the New World.

The lettered traces of the early Spanish explorers of America are definite, and generally easily decyphered inscriptions, like those of the older colonists of Greenland; and possess an inferior historical value, chiefly because of the ample materials provided by Spanish chroniclers for the history of the discovery and conquest of Spanish America. In 1850 a series of reports made to the Topographical Bureau of the United States, was issued from the War Department at Washington; and among these is the journal of a military reconnoissance from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Navajo Country, in 1849, by Lieutenant James K. Simpson of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. His narrative is accompanied with illustrations of a remarkable series of

inscriptions engraved on the smooth face of a rock of gigantic proportions called the Moro. The route of Lieutenant Simpson lay up the valley of the Rio de Zuñi, and there, as he informs us, he met Mr. Lewis who had been a trader among the Navajos, and was waiting to offer his services as guide to a rock, upon the face of which were, according to his repeated assertions, "half an acre of inscriptions." After passing over a route of about eight miles, extending through a country diversified by cliffs of basalt, and red and white sand-stone, in every variety of bold and fantastic form, they came at length in sight of a quadrangular mass of white sand-stone rock, from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet in height. This was the Moro, or Inscription Rock, on ascending a low mound at the base of which, the journalist states, "sure enough here were inscriptions, and some of them very beautiful; and although, with those we afterwards examined on the south face of the rock, there could not be said to be half an acre of them, yet the hyperbole was not near as extravagant as I was prepared to find it." On the summit of the cliff the ruins of a pueblo of bold native masonry formed a rectangle two hundred and six by three hundred and seven feet; around which lay an immense accumulation of broken pottery, of novel and curious patterns.

The inscriptions are of two classes: the native hieroglyphics, which furnish no means of judging of the dates of the oldest of such symbolic writings; and the Spanish inscriptions and devices. The longer examples of the latter class appear to be mostly imperfect, through the action of time and the defacement of later visitors. But they have not been subjected to such careful study, by competent transcribers, as to ensure their complete reproduction, or conjectural restoration; and it is probable that future explorers may be rewarded by the discovery of many additional records of interest and historical value. One apparently reads thus:—

+ *Pasamos por aqui
el sarjente mayor
y el capitan Jn de Arech-
seta y el viadante Diego Martin
Barba y el Alféres Guillen de Ynes
Josana A. 1636.*

Another, and apparently the oldest with a date affixed, A.D. 1606, is given here in facsimile. But others are in an earlier character,

device thus ingeniously interpreted includes an interwoven monogram of European characters, and the open hand, a symbol of frequent occurrence among the Indian hieroglyphics of this and other regions; though not as here, with the novel adjunct of the double thumb. It is perhaps, in the simple form in which it is introduced in groups of Indian symbolism, the same "Red Hand" which Stephens observed with such interest wherever he wandered among the ruins of Central America. Here, however, it is the work of the designer; and the monograph, which its transcriber reads as Francisco, appears more like the sacred monogram I. H. S. Perhaps it is thus placed, with an obvious significance, along side a native symbol of the Deity, or of one of his impersonated attributes. On the same face of the rock where this device occurs, is the following elaborate, though partially mutilated piece of local history, somewhat in the florid style of Oriental epigraphy:—

G. y Cap^{an} Gen^l de las Pro^{as} del Nuevo Mex^{co} por el Rey nro S^r pasó por aquí de vuelta de los pueblos de Zuñi á los 29 de Julio del año de 1620, los puso en paz á su pedim^{to} pidién dole su favor como vasallos de su Maj^{ad} y de nuevo dieron la obedienci^a; to do lo qual hizo con el agasajo solo, y prudencia como tan christianisimo . . . tan particular y gallardo soldado indomitable y loado amemos . . .

*Joseph Erramos + Diego Nuñez Bellido +
Gral y el Sapata Bartolom^e Narrso.*

Lieutenant Simpson learned from the Provincial Secretary, Don Aciano Vigil, that though the conquest of the Province was originally effected by Juan de Oñate, in the year 1595, all records preceding the year 1680 have perished, as the Indians burnt the archives in an insurrection against the Conquerors at that date. On this account therefore, the Moro Inscriptions have even some historical value; and among these the one quoted above may be classed. The proper names occur so far apart from the main inscription that their connection in the form assumed by the original transcriber, is doubtful. Translated, it reads: The Governor and Captain General of the Provinces of New Mexico, for our Lord the King, passed this place, on his return from the Pueblo of Zuñi, on the 29th of July, of the year 1620, and put them in peace, at their petition, asking the favour to become subjects of his Majesty, and anew they gave obedience; all which they did with free consent, knowing it prudent,

as well as very christian . . . to so distinguished and gallant a soldier, indomitable and famed, we love . . . Joseph Erramos + Diego Nuñez Bellido + General and Counsellor, Bartolomeo Narrso.

Great credit is due to the intelligent zeal of the officers by whom the series of Moro inscriptions were copied, under such disadvantageous circumstances, with so much care; but a more prolonged visit to the same interesting locality will probably hereafter amply repay the labours of some enterprising explorer, and add perhaps to our present materials, by the discovery of ancient native, as well as early European inscriptions of great value. The Dighton Rock sinks into insignificance amid the numerous devices and hieroglyphics graven by native artists on the Moro Cliffs, from among the lines and markings of which an ingenious fancy need find no difficulty in selecting equivalents for more than all the ancient languages affirmed to be represented in the polyglot alphabet of the Grave Creek Stone.

One other authentic memorial of the early presence of the Spaniards in the New World is derived from a different locality. In the year 1847 a stone tablet, engraven here with its curious heraldic blazonry, was found on one of the North Chincha islands off the coast of Peru, buried in the accumulated guano of centuries to a depth of eighteen feet. The shield is quartered heraldically, and pierced at the intersection with a square socket, possibly for the insertion of the beam to which a beacon-light or lantern was attached. In the first quarter is a house, or church, with a belfry-tower and bell; and over this the abbreviated word DOM. The second compartment is charged with a pelican, of which there are myriads about the guano islands; and the inscription, running on into the fourth quarter, reads: PEDRO GVR CHN ISA. The device on the third quarter, is an arm holding a blazing torch, with an inscription of which the only word now decypherable is QVEMA, *burns*. The fourth quarter bears three Islands, no doubt intended for those of the Chincha group. So far as the whole is decypherable it may read simply: *The house of Pedro, Governor of the Chincha Islands*; which the device in the first quarter of the shield probably represents correctly as no palatial edifice. But the use suggested for the socket in the centre of the shield accords with the destination which its blazonry suggests for the tablet, as the decoration of a beacon-tower attached to the residence of the insular Spanish Viceroy.

The sculptured tablet exhumed from the guano bed of the Chincha Islands, and now deposited in the British Museum, is thus a memorial of the early appropriation by the Spanish conquerors of Peru, of what we know were among the most prized possessions of the Incas long before the advent of Pizaro and his unscrupulous conquistadors. The chronological significance of the depth at which it was found receives some illustration from other discoveries subsequently made.



CHINCHA TABLET.

In May, 1860, Messrs. Trevor and Colgate, bullion dealers, New York, exhibited to the American Ethnological Society four gold relics, which formed part of a discovery made on the same Chincha Islands, by some Coolies engaged in digging graves. They included the rudely executed figure of a man, wrought with the hammer and punches, from a piece of gold weighing about twelve gold dollars; and three cups of the same metal, wrought in like manner with the hammer, and weighing about five gold dollars each. But the most interesting fact in relation to those curious native relics is that they were recovered at a depth of upwards of thirty feet below the original surface of the guano; and they carry us back centuries before the period when the sculptured memorial of the Spanish intruders, described above, was abandoned to the same slowly accumulating sepulture.

Such then are a few highly characteristic illustrations of the footprints of early American explorers and settlers, which, without attempting any exhaustive treatment of the subject, may suffice for the purpose now in view. The sculptured tablet, the engraved plate, the medal, and the coin, are nearly indestructible. Wherever they have been left they are sure, sooner or later, to turn up; and already, as we see, chance discoveries on widely scattered localities, carry us back wonderfully near the first well established dates of permanent settlement on the chief centres of early occupation. The Northmen colonised Greenland nearly eleven hundred years ago, and their memorials remain to this day, as indubitable as those of the Romans in transalpine Europe. The Spaniards took possession of the American mainland six centuries later, followed by the Portugese, the French, and the English; and the traces of all of them carry us back wonderfully near the earliest dates of their presence there. We know, moreover, from the amusing history of the Dighton Rock inscription, that the subject has attracted a lively and even eager attention for nearly two centuries; and since the revival of the traditions of the long lost Vinland, ante-Columbian inscriptions and memorials have been sought for even with an undue excess of zeal. The antiquaries of New England have done good service to the historian by their thorough exploration of all real or imaginary traces of ante-Columbian colonisation; and have no special reason to blush for the ardour with which they have been stimulated in the pursuit of so tempting a prize. If, however, some of them are inclined to reflect on the labours of their more enthusiastic confrères as a little Quixotic, they may derive consolation from the abundant counterparts that serve to keep them in countenance, in the past history of archæological research in older corners of the world. Nor has their labour been in vain. Their diligence has gone far to prove that no such relics as they sought for are to be found; and that if Icelandic and Norse rovers, or far older Egyptian, Phœnician, Greek, or Punic adventurers, ever landed, by choice or chance, on the American shores, they have left no memorials of their premature glimpses of the Western Hemisphere; and appear to have made no permanent settlements on its soil.

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